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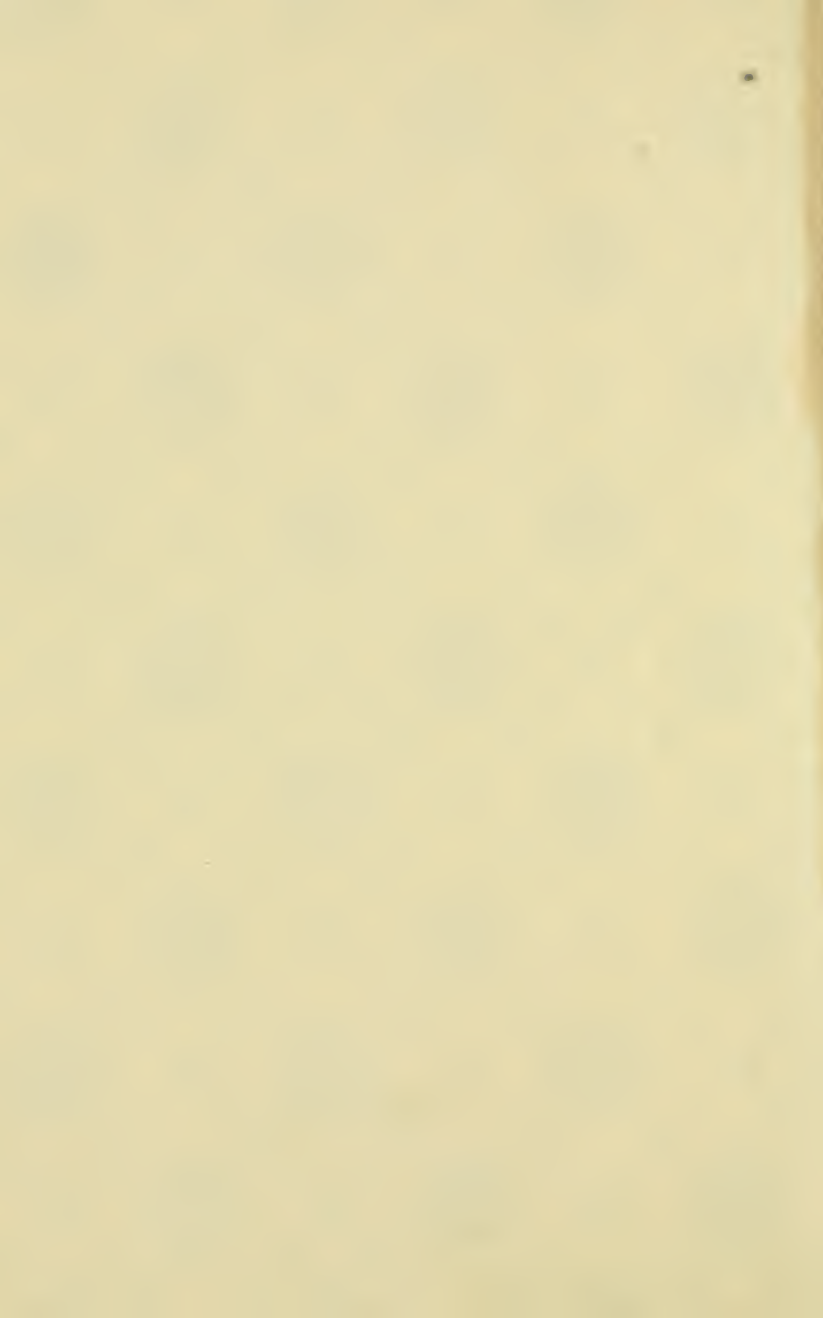


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BEATRICE EDEN



Beatrice Eden

(A Play In Three Acts)

By

PAUL MAYO



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Dedication

This bit of thwarted life I give to you,
My love,
Fulfiller of all longed-for beauties.
Through the mute syllables and silent moments
Pour the passions of my voice.
Beloved, know that only you
Have given power to culminate
Tragedy in love triumphant.



THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

JOHN EDEN

JULIA, his wife

BEATRICE EDEN, their daughter

ERIC BORDEN, a neighbor

ROSA, his wife

WATSON, a care-taker

AMY, his wife

THE TIME—Our own. In late autumn.

THE PLACE—In the high mountains of the Rockies.



ACT I

Before a mountain cabin with a background of hills and rich autumn colors. It is late afternoon and the night chill is descending as the sun goes down. A woman in a reclining chair is before the door of the cabin; it is Julia Eden. She has been waiting a long time. She stirs and draws the cover closer.

JULIA

The air grows chill — day dies so quickly
Here we are so much alone,
Even the sun is tired in seeking us.
But where is Beatrice — she was here.
Night begins to creep like a robber
Up the valley. Where is she?
Beatrice! Beatrice!

She peers through the gathering gloom.
Beatrice! Come! Come!

A girl of eighteen, possibly nineteen, enters from the slope below and runs gaily toward her mother.

BEATRICE

You called me.

JULIA

I am afraid; the night is coming.
See, the aspens now are almost hidden.
It is cold, cold,

BEATRICE

Mother, why are you afraid?
Let me put this robe around you;
Let me help you — I'm sorry
That I left you.

JULIA

Oh, how good to have you near,
My dearest one, my only one.

BEATRICE

When the world is all so beautiful
Why do you fear?
Just now a quail was calling by the spring.
His plaintive voice seemed calling me.
I went so near him, creeping through the trees
I could almost see him.
Then I heard you — What is it, mother?

JULIA

Your father is not here,
I have not seen him since this morning.
This awful night,
Why does it rush upon us like a beast.

BEATRICE

You are not yourself tonight.

Listening.

Listen, do you hear the quail again?

She runs aside.

Still by the spring he calls
If I could only cheer you, poor lonely thing.
Why is everyone so sad tonight;

You, mother, and the quail.
He is calling, calling, for his mate;
But you have me — father too will come.

She returns to Julia.

You used to weave such stories
Fairy land seemed close,
And every dancing shadow was a goblin.
Let us talk.

JULIA

I cannot re-create those fancies.
Ugly, leering thoughts are with me now.
Do you remember
Why we came to live here in these mountains?
It was not so long ago,
— Perhaps you did not understand.

BEATRICE

I remember when we came
But why, I hardly know.
Sometimes I thought I did,
But then again it seemed not true —
He is so strange —

Julia regards Beatrice steadily a moment, and then begins in a low level voice.

JULIA

The city was a gad-fly to him.
He could not rest.
Like a wild horse driven by hot-breathed furies,
Frantic, seeking rest, but still pursued
He tore and rent his soul.

She has the radiance of one who understands profoundly.

The crowding, whirling world of sense
And passions wild as dervishes
Engulfed him in a whirlpool.

Oh for peace

For respite from a thousand tortures!

One last hope remained — exile!

A refuge from too poignant life.

Very simply.

We chose this spot, one far removed

And silent as a far-off ocean island:

Here there was space, and life-giving nature;

Primal forests reached their arms to Heaven

And I too became a suppliant,

Imploring aid for him, my first love.

He found some periodic respite,

Moments when the bright original lustre of his soul

Cast off the horrid body grown around it.

But the occasional happiness became more rare —

I have fears —

One great fear overwhelms me —

BEATRICE

Mother, don't, don't!

This is not my father!

Yesterday, no longer ago, he was so gay,

We walked far into the forest

Starting quail and grouse,

He told me all the habits of the birds,

And stopping on a vantage point,

The sweep of valley down below,

Our little house sunk in the trees,

He gazed with longing eyes into the distance;

For a moment silent, then he spoke;

“My girl, my dearest Beatrice,

Man fell, the eternal curse upon him,
For he worshipped self,
Withdrawing from all Being
Sucking to his own degraded pleasure
All Life's holy glorious passions,
For his will and love
Became centripetal and not centrifugal
As first created."

Lightly.

What huge words,
I did not altogether comprehend
But as I looked into his eyes
I saw there battling exaltation
And a great despair.
My father is so deep — so deep —

JULIA

But there is one thing he does not know;
Oh! If only he could leave it alone —
Horrible!

BEATRICE

Do not think of such things any more.
When you are tired everything seems hopeless.
See! The golden pastel shades
That fill the western sky;
The afterglow of sunset.
Don't you feel that some great genius
With a master brush and boldest strokes
Has painted it for us —
She stands silhouetted against the sky.

JULIA

Looking into the distance.
Why does he stay away so long?

BEATRICE

You are not listening to me;

She returns to Julia.

Shall I sing for you?

JULIA

My poor, sweet girl.

You are too innocent, your soul unspoiled,
To know that just because the stars are lighting
And the sky is filled with color
All need not be well.

Yes, sing for me the song I love.

BEATRICE

Singing.

Where mountain trails are steep,
And age-old pines their mighty columns raise,
Come go with me, away with sleep,
Before the dawn sets all the world ablaze.

Through ancient forest aisles,
Oh love we wander re-born with the day,
Just you and I; the dark sky smiles,
As upward, ever upward leads our way.

Your arms about me fold,
When reached the windy summit bare of trees;
The plain below is bathed in gold,
Your love as glorious, me the prisoner frees.

BEATRICE

Mother, you still love romance,—

JULIA

I do love romance.
All my days
The flowerlike aspect of all I saw and felt
Enthralled me;
Sometimes how rudely were these visions shattered;
Like the showering petals of a faded rose
My treasures fall and die.
Now they are gone
Life seems as stark and bare
As the deserted heart of a dead flower.

BEATRICE

With an attempt at cheerfulness.
You are beyond my power tonight,
Wait till the morning comes
Listening.
I hear someone.

JULIA

Yes, it's John!

BEATRICE

No it is not he,
She rises.
Oh it's Eric!

Eric enters. He is a fine looking young mountaineer. There is a touch of failure — hardly perceptible — that dims his youth.

BEATRICE

You are far from home.

ERIC

You two are here alone?

BEATRICE

Yes — why not?

ERIC

I thought John Eden would be here.
He left my house some time ago.

JULIA

He was with you?

ERIC

Not with me — at my house.

JULIA

Oh!

ERIC

He left an hour before I reached home;
It is important that I see him —
May I wait?

JULIA

Please stay.
It is good to have a man about
When night comes I am lonesome.

BEATRICE

I am not afraid to be alone.
No one would do us harm.
Why should we fear?

ERIC

With some constraint.
I pray that you are right.

JULIA

She does not know enough to fear;
We older ones have grown to be suspicious
Of our very shadows;
Why do we not always stay like children?

BEATRICE

All is quiet now,
The trees alone are murmuring —
Slight pause.
And Eric you are sitting there so still;
You are not troubled?

ERIC

No, there is no trouble —
I must see John Eden.

JULIA

Could he be lost — the trail is easy.

ERIC

He is not lost.

BEATRICE

We are too solemn.

This is not the way to greet a guest.

Eric, you do not give us this pleasure often.

ERIC

It is more my loss than yours.

BEATRICE

The mountains are so gay in autumn;

I could run before the wind

Scurrying down some peaceful valley

In a cloud of flying leaves.

To-day I made a heap of pine cones;

They are such curious things,

Their hearts wide open to all the world.

ERIC

Your pine cones were an altar to what God?

BEATRICE

Not an altar but the tomb of dead summer.

ERIC

Did you weep sad tears over your lost friend?

BEATRICE

No, a fool would weep.

I know summer will be born again;

A friend immortal is not mourned.

JULIA

Uneasily.

Unless he soon returns, I will seek him;
Can he be all right?

BEATRICE

I know he is all right.

JULIA

I fear some awful thing has happened.
Why did he go!

The glow has gone and the dark is upon them. As she speaks these last words John Eden enters, and stands watching her. He is a man of middle age, tall and with a look of finish and distinction which his mountain clothes do not obscure.

JOHN

Because I chose to go.
You seem to find some satisfaction
In imagining calamity.

JULIA

Oh! John, you're back, thank God you're back.

JOHN

Coldly.

Why all this hysteria?

JULIA

I was worried.

JOHN

If it chance to suit me to wander late and far,
If I am happiest in solitude —
Then I will wander in my own good company;
In spite of all.

JULIA

John, but after dark
There are so many dangers
For a man who tramps alone through mountain
forests.

JOHN

There are dangers, but not so insidious
As those that lurk within this house.

JULIA

Here!

JOHN

A little dangerously.
You do not understand — you never do,
In that, the snake has shown his fangs,
The poisoner of life.
Give me the lengthening shadow of the forest,
Frowning cliffs and silver thread of water
Waving in the depths of some black gorge —
My mood one with these.
God! How murky is this night.

BEATRICE

Father, here is Eric come to see you.

JOHN

With great reserve.

So it is, our friendly neighbour honors us.

ERIC

Somewhat awkwardly.

When you find time there is a matter —

JOHN

Very courteously.

What is it?

BEATRICE

We can go inside.

JULIA

Yes.

She rises

BEATRICE

Come mother. Good-night, Eric.

JULIA

John, good-night.

ERIC

Good-night.

They go out. John turns his back on them. A lamp is lighted in the cabin. A shaft of light falls across the stage.

JOHN

A lovely phase of family life to show you Borden.

Turning on Borden quickly.

Why are you here?

ERIC

I chose to come.

You were at my house this afternoon.

JOHN

That wretched hole.

ERIC

No matter, you were there.

JOHN

Is this an inquisition, do you now come
To question me like any common criminal?
What do you want?

ERIC

There is no need to define. You yourself know.

JOHN

With impatience.

Oh! Don't bother me.

A clodhopper husband jealous of his wife!

Do you think I would soil my hands with her?

ERIC

Do not evade,
You have given to my wife —

JOHN

Stop! My daughter comes.
Beatrice enters.

BEATRICE

I am sorry to disturb you.

JOHN

Tenderly.
Come child, tell me of your day.

BEATRICE

Without moving she seems to draw back.
You were so harsh with Mother.

JOHN

Ah, you serious girl, what do you mean?
Here is a guest, go fetch something good to drink —
To the departing day and to my friend Borden —
May he depart as soon and sink his soul
In darkness as muddy as this night.

BEATRICE

Oh Father, Stop! Stop!

JOHN

Don't scream at me, Beatrice —

He turns facing Eric.

You, my friend, are black as night

But in your shadow shines a light, a brilliant star —

When I left she was as drunk

And blear-eyed as a full moon.

ERIC

Another word, sir, and you will pay.

BEATRICE

Gently.

Oh, Eric, please go. He is not himself,

I beg you, leave us now.

I cannot stand this longer.

ERIC

With forced self-control.

As you wish.

I cannot bring him to account

When you are here — Good-bye.

John makes a courteous movement of farewell as Eric passes him. Eric goes.

Beatrice sits down, her head in her hands; John watches her a moment.

JOHN

To himself.

I am a beast a raving cowardly beast.

But what can I do?

These awful mountains like the weight

Of ten thousand tombstones crush my chest.
I cannot breathe,
There is no way to throw them off.
My God! Why was I born!
Beatrice! Beatrice!
If you, if you too accuse me in your heart
There is no hope in earth or hell for me.

BEATRICE

I do not accuse you, but I am somehow sad.
What did you do to Eric?

JOHN

Don't look at me, your eyes condemn me;
There is no pity in them. Have you then no pity?
No! I feel disgust, abhorrence even, in your eyes. . .
Turn away, don't look at me.
I love you Beatrice;
You create fresh life
In all the dead cells of my soul —
If only you would help me!
He reaches out his hand.
Be gay once more, that's what I need,
Fresh, rich-blooded life.
Your mother coils and worms herself
Into my brain. She draws the blood
From my soul. She sucks my life —

BEATRICE

How can I be gay
When you speak thus of mother?

JOHN

Oh! How long, how long before deliverance.
This prison is too harsh, this world too strait,

A place of gnat-like souls and petty worries.

He grows wistful.

Sometimes death comes to me,

A lovely woman,

Thinly veiled in alluring mystery;

She comes so close I feel her breath;

My eyes feast on her body

Some day she will yield to my embrace

Absorbing in herself

The coarse unsolvent fibres of my being —

Then deathless love within the arms of death!

He moves towards her. She recoils.

BEATRICE

I shudder when you speak so!

My flesh creeps at your touch —

And you, my father.

JOHN

You fear me, your father!

When you say that —

I could crush your soft neck —

Throw your body to the beasts.

BEATRICE

Ah!

JOHN

Powers of Hell engulf me!

What have I said!

Don't shrink from me; don't torture me!

You cannot know what seething fires

Your fear provokes in me.
Wild stars are shooting through my eyes
The Heavens shatter; jagged fragments
Pierce my brain —
Peace! Peace! My God I pray to you.
He flings his arms up in supplication.

BEATRICE

Stop! Unless you stop,
My life shall be the price of your madness!

JOHN

Don't! Don't! My Darling, help me in.
Oh Beatrice, touch me;
Put your hands in mine and lead me where you will.
*She takes him by the hands and leads him towards
the door.*
Oh, what peace!

BEATRICE

Come, come. You are so tired.
Here is the door, one step and you are in.
Come.
*As they go in Eric appears. He stands watching
them.*

ERIC

The fiend is caged at last.
What will he do some day,
If there only were some saviour
To expel the demons from his soul.
How can I judge him?

There are some depths
That only the angel of night can judge.
Can Heaven itself save that child
From knowledge of the evil possible in life?
She does not know the shape or color
Or the appearance of sin;
Yet here before her constantly
Is spread depravity.
Within me is the will,
Courageously, without pretence, I show it,
To save her.
Why do I shrink from duty plain as day?
My wife is like a bird caught in the wind,
She lies drunk, made so by this man.
Oh, Beatrice! Why did you come too late for me?
Beatrice comes slowly from the house.

ERIC

You have left him?

BEATRICE

Oh, — is it Eric?
The world is beating in my ears.
You have come, what can I say; —
How awful when you went away.

ERIC

I could not leave you here alone.
Beatrice, I want to help you.

BEATRICE

What need is there; what can be done?
My father is not well to-night — that's all.

ERIC

You are burdened, speak to me,
A great, dark load is on your heart.
Beatrice, let me bear your sorrows.
To-night your father and your mother
Leaned too heavily on you :
The one in sorrow begging comfort
And the other in his madness
Wrapping round you all the tentacles of sin,
Sucking sweet fresh life from out your veins.
It is too much !

BEATRICE

My life is theirs !

With sudden change.

Why did you come to see my father ?
He spoke of your wife.

ERIC

I cannot tell you all that story.

BEATRICE

Please, that I may help you.

ERIC

Tenderly.

This excess of mercy is a fault in you.
It is my place to help, not yours.
All the years that I have lived, my dream
Has been acquaintance with such a one as you.
Beatrice, be my friend.

BEATRICE

I am your friend.
But you are married.

ERIC

Yes, in name — I must not speak of her.
You do not mistake my motive —
No, you are too good;
Your words were not a question.

BEATRICE

Then why did you take that woman
Before the world your wife.

ERIC

I do not complain, no word of censure
Will I utter. On me is the blame.
With nebulous maunderings
Evil men attempt to pardon weakness,
Claiming that to feel much,
Sensitive, and driven by a great hunger
Is excuse enough for sinning much.
Judge me as you will, my own inner voice
Is strident in self condemnations.
My life itself is punishment enough.
Through desperate loneliness,
That quicksand in which men struggle
Seeking some solid footing,
I was lead to place my life on that
Which first seemed to offer safety.
We met, I felt a momentary security
And sought to seal it with a vow —
That's my story.

She too protests an equal disillusionment.
Neither one can shift the whole burden of the guilt.

BEATRICE

The world to-night is a surrounding net.
Every way I turn the same restraint.
Where are the days with sunlight flooded,
Broad roads leading to some land of dreams,
The only task to choose the one desired.

ERIC

For that reason grant me this one promise;
If real danger comes — call me.

BEATRICE

There is no reason for this promise.

ERIC

God grant there may not be.
But even so, give me your word.

BEATRICE

I do.

ERIC

That is enough — I am off!
Remember!

He goes.

BEATRICE

Remember!
Oh, what shadow of this night can I forget!
With deep gashes cut in my memory.
Will the pain ever go?

My memory is a miser clutching fast
To each tiny drop of imagined gold.
Oh, dawning day, with hastening steps
Dispel this nightmare,
Through a distorted prism I see the world.
Yesterday a hunter told me how a doe
Had chanced to fall into a trap laid for a bear;
Her tiny leg was crushed by its iron jaws.
This innocent wild thing strained
In helplessness to gain her freedom,
With each plunge the teeth set deeper;
In her eyes came terror, hopeless terror
Of a wild free animal — trapped.
She could not understand,
The beauty of the day crashed round her —
I feel relentless jaws tearing me!

She goes off.

The light in the house is extinguished. The stage is blotted out. The curtain goes down and after a moment rises slowly; the stage gradually relighted with the effect of the cold light of early dawn.

Watson enters from the house carrying a saddle and bridle.

WATSON

Holy Heaven, winter is in the air. My ears will drop off.

Why in common sense does the old man want his horse at this ungodly hour? Up early; to bed late; freeze in winter; broil in summer — Oh! What a life. If I ever get away from here — but what's the use — I won't. I heard him walking all night long; he ought to go to bed instead of riding. I smell a big snow gathering up there. Pity him if he doesn't get back before it rolls down. Oh well, no use to fuss. Damn this saddle.

He goes out. John Eden enters from the house.

JOHN

Dawn will soon appear;
How long a sleepless night!
I must get away from here;
To breathe, to seek a newer meaning in myself.
My soul's waters are so muddied
No light can penetrate its crawling depths;
Faster withdraws the golden prize I seek to grasp;
But there must be a lands end somewhere
Beyond which even truth itself cannot retreat;
Does the highway of my soul
Lead to that crucial point,
The junction of the unknown and the known?
One last pilgrim's effort;
If the rainbow's end deludes me
Then there is a quick sure way;
Go to knowledge if knowledge will not come to me;
Once through that door there is no withdrawal;
Do I have the final courage?

He lifts his arms to the light of the dawn.

Oh my God do not evade me.
I do not bring unsoiled hands
But show me in what stream they may be cleansed.
When I ride back to this house
I shall be forever damned or saved!
Watson! Watson!
Hurry with that horse!

WATSON

Off stage.

Yes, He is almost saddled.

John goes.

CURTAIN



ACT II

SCENE I

The living room of the cabin; the walls are of log and at one end of the rather large room there is a big fireplace. Amy Watson enters carrying a basket of wood; she has fresh fallen snow on her clothes.

AMY

Singing.

With icy wings the winter flies,
Blow, winds, blow;
On columbine and eidelweiss
Is laid the drifting snow.

Beneath the ground tired summer sleeps,
'Til wakening spring returns;
Into my heart the hoar frost creeps
And love no longer burns.

Oh, bitter days and frozen nights,
Go, Winter, Go!
With cold despair my spirit fights
But Spring will come I know.

She puts down her basket and works with the fire.

AMY

Months and months will pass,
We will be here all alone;
The rest of the world might die

And we would never know :
Snowed in like animals
We must live through the winter.

She sings over again the last verse, "Oh, bitter days" etc.

Watson enters.

WATSON

We have plenty of wood cut, thank the Lord.
Br-r-r-r it is cold.

How good that you made the fire. They will soon
be up.

AMY

I hope Mrs. Eden is all right with this changing
weather.

WATSON

Did you know that the old man has gone away?

AMY

Gone — Where?

WATSON

On his horse; he left this morning; I don't where.

AMY

No, it isn't possible.

WATSON

Yes, I helped him start myself. He came to me

early this morning and got me out. "Get my horse ready. Hurry!" He said.

AMY

When will he be back?

WATSON

Unless he hurries — He won't come back. There is a blizzard coming; you can't see as far as the big pine.

AMY

What will they say? It will be hard to tell her. Why did you let him go?

WATSON

You know what he's like. I'd sooner face a snow-slide than his tongue; what could I do? Besides he's not the only one to blame — she treats him like the devil; and so does his daughter — a man has a right to his thirst. Why don't they let him alone — torment a horse long enough and he becomes an outlaw. I know why he went. This damn snow's falling on us like chains locked for seven months.

AMY

I hope he is not caught out there. It is bad enough at home. (A pause) — There she burns. Don't let it go out. You might as well stay here until they come. I brought in plenty of wood; there it is in the basket.

WATSON

I am sorry I forgot to do that.

She goes out. Watson sits down by the fire and stirs it for a moment. Beatrice enters.

BEATRICE

How good the fire feels.

See the snow against the window

Struggling to approach the warmth.

Where is my father?

WATSON

He is not here.

BEATRICE

You mean that he has gone?

WATSON

Yes.

BEATRICE

But in this storm he will be lost.

WATSON

Yes — perhaps — but he is gone.

BEATRICE

Something must be done. — Mother must not know.

WATSON

How can she fail to know. He is not here,

BEATRICE

No matter how, just keep it from her.
How was he when he left; what did he say?

WATSON

He seemed all right; it was this morning early that
he called me, ordering his horse.

BEATRICE

This is too awful; he has sought death.
Some ways of life seal an unalterable doom.
Oh, father — father —
You stay here, I am going.
He steps between her and the door.

WATSON

No, not you too!

BEATRICE

Just a little way; I must find help.
It has been promised me.
Earnestly.
If ever you have been faithful to my family
Do not betray me now;
Keep my mother 'til I return.
There is one ready to face the storm
In search of him.
My coat, hurry! There it is.
It seems the heavens let loose their anger
When we are least protected.
There — remember what I said.
She must not know!
She goes out.

WATSON

What will happen now.

Going to an inner door and calling.

Amy! Amy!

Within, "Yes, Yes. I'm coming."

Come quick!

Amy enters. He approaches her confidently.

WATSON

Listen, Amy. The girl has gone, the Lord knows where; but she made me promise not to tell her mother anything. You must help me keep her in the dark. Not a word about him. — Why did I let her go?

AMY

Don't blame yourself. — I promise, but how can we do it? I can't lie to her. She will know in spite of us.

WATSON

You'll find a way. Here she comes.

Amy goes out. Julia enters. She does not seem well.

WATSON

Here's a chair, Mrs. Eden. Sit by the fire; it is very cold this morning.

JULIA

Thank you.

WATSON

Amy is coming with your breakfast. There, move up closer. Our battle with the cold has begun.

JULIA

Where are they?

WATSON

I do not know, they will soon be here.

JULIA

It never fails; when I do not feel well
They leave me utterly alone — always alone —
Yet Beatrice pretends to love me —
He does not — in that at least he is frank —
Scarcely a word has he spoken to me —
Life has lost its flavor —
What is there left for me!

WATSON

Miss Beatrice is doing her best for you.

Looking out of the window.

My! How the storm blows;
God help those who are not safe at home.
The trail will be impassable.

JULIA

Throw some more wood on the fire!
Do you want to freeze me, Watson?
Get me a blanket; my body feels like ice.

WATSON

Yes, Mrs. Eden, I will get you one.
It is growing worse. Hear that wind!

He goes to a cupboard for a blanket. Amy enters with a tray.

JULIA

Put it there Amy. No! Not there!
Right here beside me.

Amy places the tray on a small table beside her and stands near looking very much concerned.

JULIA

How can I eat while you are standing there;
Not at all fretfully.
What is wrong with everybody in this house.

WATSON

Let me put this blanket round you.

He wraps her in an additional blanket. While behind Julia's back he motions to Amy. She goes out very quietly.

JULIA

Watching Amy.

I have been troubled by a memory —
Let me tell you.

Watson, have you heard the tale
About the old woman who lived
Far back in these hills,
Alone, save for her daughter?
A strange girl, bred to the mountains —
They seemed to speak to her,
When wandering through aspen forests —
There the aspen grew as large as any pine —

She heard myriad voices,
Sometimes in chorus,
Sometimes singly, speaking low,
A gentle murmuring;
What they said none knew but herself.
In all things else she seemed like any person.
One year rich autumn spread
Its transient glory over all the hills,
Giving way too soon,
Before the first early snow,
Like this one raging now,
Too violent, too stern a conqueror;
Unlike winter's usual slow advance,
First the scouts and then the murderous vanguard.
Within the cabin
Like a caged bird she fretted,
Powerless was her mother;
All day long she stood before the window
Listening, watching;
As the storm became more violent.
No word would she give of explanation.
Trying in vain to penetrate the snow,
To see the mountains just across the valley.
Some unknown thing,
Precious to her was in danger there.
Night suddenly overwhelmed the world,
Descending, a dark rushing flood.
She seemed resigned to her imprisonment
And joined her mother at the evening meal.
Put off her guard by this feigned submission
The old woman left her alone,
While busy with the evening tasks.
No one knows what happened then.
Returning to the room a moment later
The door was found wide open,

The storm screamed in,
Snow was piled about the floor;
The girl was not there.
Some footprints, fast filling,
Lead into the night.
The mother fought with the storm,
Like the invisible hand of fate
It would not let her go.
The night passed somehow
Late the next day the storm abated;
Wild with sorrow, lead only by her instinct,
Deep within the forest
In a bed of glistening white,
Lay her daughter,
Clasping in her lifeless arms —
One broken golden aspen twig.
The autumn glory dead
Spread its ravaged beauty round her.

WATSON

Quickly.
But she was crazy.

JULIA

Perhaps — I do not know —
Why did I think of this?

WATSON

You too have a daughter.

JULIA

She is safe — now.
May Death's frozen hand

Never close about her soul —

Her body does not matter.

Wrap this blanket closer around me.

She coughs.

There is a pain here.

She places her hand on her chest.

The door opens and Beatrice enters in a cloud of snow.

JULIA

Who's there?

WATSON

You're back. Thank God!

JULIA

Beatrice!

BEATRICE

Yes, I'm back — unfortunately.

JULIA

What! Did you venture out into the storm?

Beatrice goes to Julia.

Your face and hair are caked with snow.

BEATRICE

I had to go.

JULIA

Don't be so foolish.

BEATRICE

Yes, I had to go.
You must know the truth, there is no escape.
Father has gone away.

JULIA

Oh! —

BEATRICE

This morning early, while we slept,
He rode away —
I tried to get help —
Eric lives too far away.

JULIA

Don't jest with me —
Why did you let him go!
Why did you —

BEATRICE

Mother.

JULIA

Coughing.
Oh, this pain.
Why was I not told?
You live to make my life a burden.
Please go.

WATSON (*to Beatrice*)

Don't let her words wound you,
She does not know what she's saying.

JULIA

I am sorry, Beatrice,
But this is more than I can bear.
To find that you had left me here alone —
And he is wandering in the snow;
Perhaps this very moment
As the fire's warmth pervades me
He is lying stiff and cold,
Each snowflake marks him as a victim.

BEATRICE

Don't give way to morbid dreams,
He is strong and can fight his way.

JULIA

Strength will not serve.
All the world conspires to cause me sorrow.
If I could only seek him —
That death would be sweet.

BEATRICE

You cannot go, Mother.
I went scarce one hundred yards,
Before the storm forced me back.

JULIA

No, I cannot go.
Please leave me now —
They cross the room behind her.

WATSON

To Beatrice.
We must watch her.

BEATRICE

She said that death would be sweet.
Do not leave her alone.

WATSON

You can trust me.

Beatrice goes out. Watson watches Julia for a moment.

JULIA

Watson, are you there?

WATSON

Yes.

JULIA

Come here.

She speaks to him in a low voice.

Don't you think I could go?

To breathe fresh unwarmed air would help this pain,
Would cleanse my breast.

WATSON

Do not say such a thing,
You could not reach the spring,
See the snow about the window.

JULIA

As you wish; I shall sleep now —
Will he ever come?

Oh, my soul in sympathy is frozen.
I am cruel, you and Beatrice are heartless,
Resting safe at home while he is out there.

WATSON

But we could not help him
Even if we found him.

JULIA

No, we could not help him.
Go! Go!

*Watson pretends to go but watches her through
the door for a moment. She feigns sleep. He goes.*

JULIA

Before my eyes the snow is falling,
Down, down,
Like the never ceasing labor of a waterfall,
Streaks of white, down, down,
Trees are seen no more.
Always falling, grim, relentless,
Insidious as the slow deposits of sin,
At last overwhelming all.
Cruel white murderer.
Before my eyes always falling,
Hastening to your work of death.

Silent a moment.

I see him struggling through the clinging drifts,
Rolling helpless down the gullies,
Now he is unable to rise,
His horse abandoned long ago,
Why did you go, why did you leave me,
Flying away as if I were a dread disease?
Do you remember now,
While in the snow's embrace,
When first you held me in your arms.

Oh, horrid days that came between us
Loosening that first fond caress.

John! John!

Let death rejoin our lives.

She rises glancing around stealthily.

They will not know until too late.

There is no coat, what does it matter,

This blanket will serve.

May God guide me to you,

Our last meeting.

She goes out.

CURTAIN — SCENE'S END.

ACT II

SCENE II

A small sheltered spot among the snow laden evergreens. Julia lies huddled in her blanket on the snow. In the distance it is snowing but her little nook is protected from all but the wind and drifting snow. Little light reaches her through the trees from the lowering gray sky. She lies motionless. From somewhere comes a muffled chorus of voices.

WOMEN'S VOICES

Through long hours she wandered far
A soul laid bare to Heaven's wrath,
The cruel day gave not a star
To mark her lonely path.
Lower, feebler burned the flame
That urged her on to him she sought.
The woods re-echoed to his name,
Her cry no answer brought.

MEN'S VOICES

From a raging hell within
His tortured soul, he sought relief;
Alone he bore the weight of sin,
No one could share his grief.
In open hand he took his soul
And cast it as a dice is thrown,
Along the Great Divide to roll
To East, to West — unknown.

WOMEN'S VOICES

The long forgotten days of love
When through the world they went as one,

Returned a haunting memory of
A life whose joy is done.
At last the flame has died away,
With cold despair her heart is wrung;
She kneels in loneliness to pray —
By falling snow her dirge is sung.

MEN AND WOMEN

Man can turn the powers of earth
Obedient to his will;
The mountain streams are made to serve,
The forests fall before his might,
But his own soul is free.
Like heaping snow drifts strangely ruled
By vagaries of the wind,
In spite of will and mournful prayers
By tiny flakes that blindly fall
On hastening breezes come from God —
His fate is sealed.

John appears all snow covered, staggering from exhaustion. He sees the figure and rushes to her lifting her from the snow. He looks into her face and recognizes Julia.

JOHN

Oh, my Julia, Julia, is it you;
My Julia, — to find you here,
Huddled in the snow.
Speak to me, Julia, speak to me!
How stiff and cold —
Oh, what has happened!

Eric comes tramping through the snow and watches John as he holds Julia, trying to chafe her hands to

brush the snow from her face, to wrap her closer in the blanket.

ERIC

John, I've been looking for you.

JOHN

Borden!

ERIC

Yes, Eden, I tried to follow her.

JOHN

What happened!

My God, why is she here!

Was it because of me?

ERIC

Perhaps.

Repents this cruelty.

JOHN

Don't spare me.

I left — desperate —

To seek a new guiding star,

The heavens have been dark, no light

Has shone to lead me from the forest.

But God willed otherwise.

My body was too weak to face the storm

And now I am driven home

A half frozen animal that drifts before the wind.

ERIC

John, I did not mean to accuse;
She was worried by your strange absence,
Without warning, she left.
Beatrice sent for me —
That is all I know.

JOHN

We must get her home before it is too late.

ERIC

Come.

JOHN

Which is the way?
This blinding storm has bewildered me.

ERIC

Follow my trail, let me carry her.

JOHN

No!

ERIC

But you are tired.

JOHN

She is mine; do not touch her.

ERIC

Come, then.

JOHN

Picking up Julia.

How bitter is the memory
Of a cruelty too well succeeded.

They go out.

CURTAIN — SCENE'S END.

ACT II

SCENE III

Same as Scene I, Act. II. Beatrice is beside the window trying to peer through the gathering darkness. Rosa Borden is there sitting with her head in her hands. She is nervously rocking.

ROSA

What was that?

BEATRICE

Her voice is tired.
Nothing, just some snow
That fell from an overburdened tree.

ROSA

When will they come?

BEATRICE

You have only one out there,
I have two.

There is a noise of tramping and Eric comes in followed by John who is still carrying Julia.

BEATRICE

Rushing to them.
Oh, Thank God!
Both of you back. — My poor mother.

ERIC

I came upon them just as he had found her.

JOHN

A chair!

ROSA

Here by the fire.

BEATRICE

Oh, my poor mother, Why did you go.

Helping her father to rest Julia in a chair. Taking her hands.

Cold, ice cold,

There seems to be no blood in your dear body.

JOHN

She had lain long in the snow,
Crumpled like a wounded bird.

BEATRICE

Breathe, Breathe!

God send breath!

JOHN

She seemed to breathe when first I found her,
It was so far to come.

ERIC

Rosa, help Beatrice take off her clothes,
Chafe her hands.

ROSA

Let me help.

BEATRICE

Can she be dead? — Mother!
Mother open your eyes.
I feel that she is dead.
Her soul is calling mine.

JOHN

Some whiskey.
Going to sideboard.

ERIC

Yes.

ROSA

Here's a glass.
John pours.

JOHN

Going to Julia.
Help me, Beatrice.

ERIC

Could one as frail as she live after such exposure?
I felt the chill creeping into my heart.

BEATRICE

Her teeth are set as one in death.
Sinking on floor.
Dead! Dead! Mother, My Mother!

JOHN

Beatrice! Don't! While there is hope.

BEATRICE

There is no hope.

JOHN

Julia! Let me hold you once more.

He places his arms around her.

Come, my wife.

He carries her into the bedroom, Beatrice following.

ERIC

Evil is a many headed snake,

The innocent its victims.

If I had the power!. . . .

ROSA

Eric! What are you saying?

ERIC

You stayed with her while I was away?

ROSA

Yes.

ERIC

How did she seem?

ROSA

Self possessed but very sad.

ERIC

Oh, pure white gentle heart,
The muddy stream of life is jealous of your beauty.

He is silent a moment.

We must go.

ROSA

No, it is too cold, too far.

ERIC

We must go!

At least there are some moments sacred.

Going to door.

Watson! Watson! Come here.

He comes.

There is a tragedy in this house.

If I am needed let her know that you

As messenger will bring me back.

WATSON

I saw you three come in. How is she?

ERIC

Her soul has found peace,

Her body? — I do not know.

That is all.

WATSON

Yes sir.

He goes.

ROSA

I cannot go back in this storm.

ERIC

You must! Do not fear.

Death is not greedy;

He has taken his fill.

He leads her unwillingly away.

CURTAIN

ACT III

Same as Act II Scene III; a month later. John is sitting beside the fire; Rosa is standing in the middle of the room watching him closely.

ROSA

Unless they return soon night will catch them.

JOHN

Why do you worry, Rosa?

ROSA

I am not worried; I thought you might be,
She is not very wise.

JOHN

Looking at her sharply.
You do not trust your husband.

ROSA

No, not that — of course I do —
A silly thing for me to say.
But she is good to look upon.
Since her mother's death
The bud half-opened has come to full-flowering
beauty.

JOHN

To himself.
And then the petals fall.

ROSA

I am talking idly as the winds of summer.
Looking about.
I want a drink.
Where is your old-time hospitality?
We used to be somewhat gay —

JOHN

If you want a drink then get it for yourself.
Can I not leave the dust unstirred
In some dark corners long ago deserted!

ROSA

Not so long ago.

JOHN

Just one short month —

ROSA

Yes, — but do not speak so loud;
A ghost not yet settled may be wandering close.
He does not speak but covers his face with his hands.

ROSA

You may soon forget.
Going to sideboard.

There is not much here.

Pours a drink.

Have some John dear? — No? — That's strange.

Here's to a failing memory

Conquering enemy of all ghosts.

Drinks.

Don't mind, John, you will not always remember.

JOHN

If you speak another word — I'll choke you.

ROSA

Your fingers have a fondness for a woman's throat;

They have closed on mine before —

But not in anger.

JOHN

The night is creeping 'round us;

You hurl its blackness deep into my soul.

ROSA

Don't be angry John, I'll say no more.

Your whiskey is so good it greased my tongue.

JOHN

You sicken me.

ROSA

Leads him to a chair.

Come, please be quiet.

Just forget what I have said.

You know I did not mean it.
Like a cat, I love to tease a crippled mouse.
I know it's cruel,
But then I too have known some cruelty;
I have sometimes been the mouse, you the cat.
We were saying that the night is coming on;
Unless my husband comes it will be hard to find our
house.

JOHN

Yes, for you alone — he is all right.

ROSA

Suddenly serious.

John, I do not trust my husband.
Please do not let him come here anymore.

JOHN

He may be a fool. Beatrice is not.

ROSA

She does not know what is happening to him.

JOHN

You need not fear.

ROSA

I ask just this of you;
Do not let him see Beatrice.

JOHN

That is impossible;
I cannot lock her in.

ROSA

John, please;
I beg it in the name of old acquaintance.

JOHN

Laughing.

As you wish. To-night will be the last
If I can make it so.

ROSA

Thank you.

JOHN

Now are you satisfied?
Then please excuse me, I am tired.
When they come, call me.

He goes out wearily.

ROSA

I will wait here.

She is quiet a moment, looks around, and then stealthily goes to the sideboard and drinks. She returns to her chair and gazes at the fire. A noise is heard outside. As Beatrice and Eric enter Rosa places herself in an alcove in the shadow.

ERIC

How lovely here.
Takes her coat.

Come warm yourself,
I did not know it was so cold.
My mind was elsewhere.

BEATRICE

Where have they gone?

ERIC

What does that matter?
Watching her.
Why are you so quiet?

BEATRICE

I do not know.
In here a thousand thoughts come to me,
Every chair, each table,
This her place beside the fire,
Remind me of a month ago —
That awful night —
Out there where all is white
And pines point to Heaven
I forget.
Her grave beneath the cliff is like a haven
In the soft enfolding soul of God,
The snow that glistens in the moonlight
Is a symbol of her soul's purity;
Here the air is heavy with earth and flesh
And all that dies.

ERIC

Beatrice! Beatrice!
Let me touch one corner of your soul

The hem of its flowing whiteness,
And I will be free, I ask no more.
An outcast gazing through the luminous windows
Of your glorious self, those dark sad eyes;
I do not ask that you should take me in
And clothe me with your radiance
No, I do not ask so much;
Just let the light shine on me,
Do not close cold hard shutters.

BEATRICE

Eric, I am not harsh.
If there is a way that I can help,
Ask it of me; there may be a time
When I again shall call to you.

ERIC

If you only would!

BEATRICE

You do not know how poor I am,
A beggar even.

ERIC

Then we are together
In our fancied poverty.
I am grateful for that one bond.
Someday we shall seal it!

BEATRICE

That cannot be.
Your sympathy, — how much it meant to-night —

As you stood beside me in Death's presence,
Has carried you beyond yourself.
It is too much to ask always another's tears.

ERIC

If I could always give them to you.
But now once more I must leave you.

He rises and goes to the window.

A glorious sea of rolling white surrounds us.

Rosa comes out of the alcove. Her hair is somewhat rumpled. She is not quite herself.

ROSA

Confusedly.

What does this mean?

BEATRICE

You!

ROSA

Slowly.

I heard you talking, yes, I heard you;

I went in there to rest, to sleep.

Turning to Eric.

You have no right to keep me waiting here forever.

Just to sleep I went in there;

And then I heard you talking.

ERIC

Why, is that so strange?

ROSA

But you were saying something, about — about —
Bonds, sympathy, tears, all that rubbish.
When a woman's husband. . . .

ERIC

Enough! Where is Eden?

ROSA

Waving towards other room.
There, he was tired too.
John! Oh, John!
He said to call him when you came.
I'll tell him 'bout the tears.

John enters.

John! Oh, he is here. John, they're back.

JOHN

So I see.
Beatrice, you were late.

BEATRICE

I hate to leave her there alone
When night is coming on.
She seemed to float about me
Through the blue haze of moonlit snow.

JOHN

It is not good to go out there so often.
A month has passed — one long bitter month
A million years compressed in thirty days;
They pound my brain like thirty demons.

ERIC

It was my fault we were so long.

ROSA

Just what I've been saying.

ERIC

We must go.

ROSA

I don't want to, John;
I don't want to go to bed
Without a good-night drink —
Let's have one John.

JOHN

Don't go, there is plenty of room.
It is good to have other voices in the house;
They drown recurring echoes.

ERIC

The trail is clear, we cannot stay —
Come!

ROSA

No! No! I don't want to go.

JOHN

There is no need to tramp that weary way.
I will tell Watson to prepare for you.

ERIC

It would be a pleasure; but —

Looks at Beatrice who regards him steadily.

BEATRICE

Stay.

ERIC

We will.

He watches Rosa.

You need rest. Where may I take her?

JOHN

This room is yours.

ERIC

Thank you.

He leads Rosa away very gently. She is getting sleepy. They go.

JOHN

What a fool she is.

BEATRICE

Yes?

JOHN

She is — and so am I.

She made me give a promise.

BEATRICE

What?

A simple question.

JOHN

That Eric should not come here any more.

BEATRICE

You gave your word to her?

JOHN

She seemed worried about him.

It was the easiest way, to humor her.

BEATRICE

What nonsense is she thinking.

Do you know that mother died one month ago to-night?

JOHN

Can I forget. —

Each day I feel more her murderer.

BEATRICE

No!

JOHN

I was the cause, my insane way of life,

The way I spoke, that terrible mistaken journey;

If I had stabbed her with a knife
I should not be more the cause.

BEATRICE

You often rode away in silence;
You did not know the snow was coming.

JOHN

Beatrice! I know my crime
But in the joy of hearing you defend me —
I almost forget how I found her lying there.
That sight engraved with bitter acid
On my brain; you alone dissolve it.

BEATRICE

I? How do I do that?

JOHN

You do, Beatrice, you do.
Only say again that you are my own daughter,
Once more you know me as your father,
Placing in my hands a child's unreasoned love.
If you only could forget the ways
I spent that father's heritage.

BEATRICE

If I but could.

JOHN

You can. Say you can.

BEATRICE

I can and will.

JOHN

Thank God — at last!

He attempts to take her in his arms. She shrinks a little against her will.

JOHN

Close, close, my own dear child.

He holds her face close to his, gazing into her eyes.
Your eyes tell the same hopeless tale;
You can't forget.

He releases her. He looks around helplessly; sees the liquor.

It has been long, my old time friend,
Since we communed together.
Just one brief call and then good-night.

He drinks.

BEATRICE

Again!

JOHN

When all others go you still remain;
Yes, again!

He drinks.

BEATRICE

Rising.

Do you have more to say?

JOHN

Don't go, yet.
There are so many things unsaid.
My brain teems with thought;
A stranded actor long off the boards
Desires an audience, no matter who or how few.
You are my audience.

BEATRICE

Let me speak!
Watson told me of the tale
My mother told him that fateful day;
The girl who saw the early storm destroy her love.

JOHN

I know the old-wives tale; what of it?

BEATRICE

This — I have no loves left now
But my own maiden's dreams,
The night is as sharp and cold as steel,
And merciless, I hear the avalanche, —
It will engulf me, let me go!
She attempts to go but he restrains her.

JOHN

No! You shall not leave me.
He clenches her arm too tight.

BEATRICE

You hurt me.

JOHN

Forgive — a thoughtless act.
Sit down again.

BEATRICE

To what end?

JOHN

'Tis my command!
I love to look at you,
Your anger cuts me like a knife
But still it fascinates.
There are some who love self-torture —
I am such a one.
Glare, glare, hate, despise me!

BEATRICE

Once more I beg you as your daughter,
Let me go!

JOHN

No!

BEATRICE

Then listen to my prayer.
You ask again my child's love —
How can I give it?

JOHN

You must. If not that love, then any love.

Don't ignore me as you would a worm.
I will have your soul!

He starts toward her and grasps her shoulders.

BEATRICE

Do not touch me.
Shrinks back.

JOHN

Not that, not that!

BEATRICE

No! No!

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE

"What's that" —
Watson enters.

WATSON

I heard a cry.

BEATRICE

It was nothing, nothing. I was frightened.

JOHN

She thought she saw a man's face at the window.

WATSON

Did you?

BEATRICE

I saw an awful face, a fiend.

She goes.

WATSON

Was there anyone?

JOHN

No, imagination; she is nervous,
All undone, thinking of her mother.

WATSON

Too bad, a pity.

Will you come in to supper?

JOHN

Yes, I am hungry.

A gnawing hunger, —

Borden is here; call him.

He goes.

WATSON

Yes sir.

Watson knocks on both doors and announces supper and then goes. Beatrice slowly enters. Before she has crossed the room Eric meets her.

ERIC

You were good to ask us to stay.

I hoped to hear the word you spoke.

Just one small word from your lips, and I am happy.

BEATRICE

I wanted you to be near.
I feel this house will not be kind to me.

ERIC

I heard you cry.
It seemed more from sorrow than from fear —
I thought you mourned.

BEATRICE

I did cry for sorrow.
Some are dead who have the appearance of life.

ERIC

Tell me.

BEATRICE

My real father died long ago;
This warped shell that assumes his person —
Is not he.
How can I give my love to an ugly shadow?

ERIC

He threatened you?

BEATRICE

The shadow seeks to penetrate my being.

ERIC

The issue is clear!
At last the time has come for us to go;
Abandon this dark place.

BEATRICE

Where are the wings for such a flight?

ERIC

Love lifts us up, love will float us
Over all the mountain ranges.
Beatrice, I love you, strong my love,
It is so true that left unspoken
Crushed and doubted, still it lives
And leaps around you like a flame.
Know my love, it seeks you constantly.
With such power to bear us up,
How can we fall!

BEATRICE

The world again has warmth,
The ice is melted from my soul.
Great earthly fire, your heat
Streams through the channels of all Being.
Eric, now at last the word is spoken,
It shall make us free.

ERIC

You receive my love?
The gates of Heaven have opened.

BEATRICE

I love you.

ERIC

Beatrice.

He takes her in his arms.

Bleak winter vanishes
And you, my pure white flower,
Surround me with your living beauty.
I love you.
Now the world has lost its power.

BEATRICE

The dark world, Eric, it is near.
We forget, this blessed moment passes
And once more its chains are forged,
Link by link; — they can't be broken.

ERIC

Time is nothing now
With knowledge of our final freedom.
Just a little while, we must be patient.
Then those chains will drop forever.

BEATRICE

Help me Eric.
Sense of sin is creeping over me,
Fire me with your faith in life's fulfillment.

ERIC

There is no wrong where love is.
This is no passing lustful fancy,
Long have I known and tested it,
Each trial, unhappy drab and ugly days,
The final proof, have only served
To make triumphant this one holy thing;
I love you, Beatrice.
And now the lonely groping fingers
Of my love have clasped your hand.

BEATRICE

There is no wrong, but the uncertainty,
If this door or that would open —
Then our love would turn to sin —
Or worse, to scandal.

ERIC

I know our present weakness.
But what are those straw barriers,
When the time shall come,
They will fall before us.

BEATRICE

We must hasten, someone might come.

ERIC

For our short remaining imprisonment
My care must be to keep you safe.
To-night I will not sleep, you need not fear,
A call will bring me to you.

BEATRICE

I do not fear, with your help the days will pass;
And then at last — our freedom.

ERIC

Again takes her in his arms.
My loved one.

BEATRICE

Someone comes.

ERIC

Remember, do not be afraid.

BEATRICE

My father.

ERIC

My love is always with you.

BEATRICE

Good-bye, I love you, Eric.

ERIC

My soul remains with you through all the night.

Eric goes, and John enters.

JOHN

Will you have your dinner now?

Where is Borden?

BEATRICE

He is with her. I am not hungry.

All I want is to be alone.

JOHN

With pleasure, my lady.

Half mocking.

I will send Watson to them.

John goes out.

As John leaves, Beatrice lingers by the window a moment, and then hearing him return goes to her room.

JOHN

I feel frozen, Ah, this will warm me.

Drinks.

Alone, forever alone.

Empty rooms and frozen hearts my sole companions.

Oh, God, the world lies 'round me

Barren as a winter moon —

Have You too passed me by?

He sits down and seems to sleep. The fire burns low until the room is almost dark, suggesting the passing of an hour or two. Finally he is heard to stir; getting up he throws some more wood on the fire. Moving aimlessly at first he then glances towards Beatrice's room, moves towards it quietly, opens the door and enters . . . Beatrice backs into the living room very, very slowly as if frozen with horror. Her eyes are on the open door through which she has just come. John appears in the frame of the doorway,—his face strange and tense. Beatrice stands perfectly still but not in fear—horror has overcome every thought of herself. Still under the spell, she cries in a whisper. Her cry releases John. He moves into the room and stands in the glow of the fire place. Eric enters with quiet rapidity.

BEATRICE

Eric, Eric! He is there.

ERIC

Beatrice!

He and John look steadily at each other. Beatrice hides her face.

JOHN

Recoils before Eric's glance.

Why, this room is so dark.

I cannot see —

You scorn me — Speak for God's sake, speak!

This silence kills me!

ERIC

You, you, why were you there?

JOHN

I crept close to see her sleeping,

The only time her face is not turned from me. . . .

She knelt in prayer.

When I came near she shrank from me. . . .

Am I a hateful thing,

My eyes, do they reveal depravity,

That she cannot look upon me. . . .

Where is the light,

Darkness swarms about me.

BEATRICE

Take me from here.

ERIC

Into this room.

He takes her into her room. As they leave, John goes to the window. Outside the world is crystal white.

JOHN

Radiant night,
You show me to what depths I've sunk.
No detail of the world
Is seen from out this pit.
Where are the pines, the mountains, hidden.
My eyes grow dim blinded
By the piercing glory of the snow;
There flies a shadow tossed upon the wind.
Some angry driven soul, no rest, no peace.
There another shadow
Lies along the whiteness,
Crouched it seems,
Like some lost animal that bows its head
Receiving then the death stroke. . . .
Julia, you, you, once more I find you.
There, there,
You sought me wandering, lost I am,
Julia! You have come.
Patiently you beat upon the frozen walls,
And now I hear.

He opens the door, speaks in a low voice.
Life parted us,
But death reknits our severed souls.

He goes. Eric returns, looks for John but not seeing him, he realizes that John has gone forever.

He moves toward Beatrice's closed door — stops still. It is the renunciation. He goes then to Rosa's room.

CURTAIN

17 W





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